風波しのぎ
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THE NEW GATE
ザ・ニュー・ゲート
01.終わりと始まり
アルファポリス

Volume 1 Special

Until the Day of the First Step

After she sent off the last customer, Tiera counted how many of each item were left on the shelves. She had plenty of salves used for healing wounds and class 7 potions, which were classified as high-class potions, left over; probably because these were inconvenient to use. The most popular items at present were the middle-class potions, class 8 and 9 potions. They were reasonably priced and when you go off on an adventure, you want to take at least one.

“We have only two bottles left. I should make more.”

She left the ‘Please Call Us’ sign on the counter and moved to the workshop.

“Hillock herb, purified water and a spoonful of magic stone powder…”

She mixed dried hillock herb with magic stone powder, added clarified water and heated the mixture. When the compound dissolved in the clarified water, it changed color to light blue.

Once she made sure that all the components had dissolved, she poured the solution into a cylindrical container which was around 20 cemels in height and 1 cemel in diameter.

Then all that was left to do was to put a lid on it.

“If it’s as easy as this, I might become overconfident with my skills.”

She gently sighed while looking at the class 8 potion she had made in only half an hour.

The workshop of Tsuki no Hokora was equipped with the best facilities.

With these facilities, even Tiera who had just recently started to

work as an alchemist, rarely failed unless she worked on challenging compounds.

Normally, if she used ordinary tools, it would take a day or more to do the same work.

She had heard of how the alchemists in her homeland had experienced hard times and saw the great works of Schnee, the acting store manager. That helped her avoid becoming overconfident.

Next, she made a class 9 potion before she was called and then walked back into the store.

“Thank you for waiting.”

“Hi Tiera. Your fur looks great as usual.”

A catman stood at the counter. He was a regular customer.

He liked Tiera and often visited the store. However, while Tiera looked like a catwoman to him, this was just an illusion created by Schnee.

“Sorry, Tiera. Our leader is clinging to you.”

The catwoman spoke with a fed-up look on her face. She belonged to his party and was also a familiar face to Tiera.

Tiera quickly looked around the store, but she didn’t see the other members of his party such as the wolfman or the dwarf.

“Welcome, good customer. Do you want the usual?”

“I have something I’d like to tell you today, Tiera!”

The man looked serious, while Tiera just showed a business like smile. “Again…” Tiera muttered to herself.

In her homeland, she had been famous for her beauty. Elves are generally beautiful but she was outstanding even for an elf.

Since she started working for the store, Tsuki no Hokora, she had often been approached by men.

Since she always rejected them, there were fewer suitors that approached her. Nevertheless, some like this catman still tried.

“I’m sorry but I will still not accept you. You are more like a younger brother to me.”

Elves have much longer lifespans than beasts.

In fact, Tiera had known him ever since he was a greenhorn adventurer. Although he grew into an experienced adventurer, she still felt as if he was just like a naughty little brother.

He was disappointed by her answer. The catwoman tapped his shoulder and said, “You see? I told you.”

Officially, her reason for rejecting them was that as a resident of Tsuki no Hokora she didn’t want to bother Schnee by having a relationship with someone.

In reality though, she was afraid that she would expose them to danger. She was cursed and accordingly strong monsters were attracted to her. Normal adventurers would be overwhelmed by them. Only someone like Schnee could deal with the monsters she attracted.

She never wanted to be in the situation where someone was injured or killed because of her. Above all, she feared their reactions, when they discovered that she was a cursed girl who attracted monsters.

She was still haunted by the sad memory of how the people in her homeland had treated her like a monster 50 years ago.

“Sigh….”

She leaned on the counter and looked out of the window.

There were no clouds in the sky and the sun shone down on the trees.

Tiera went out for a change.

Closing her eyes, she soaked up the sunlight and felt the wind on her cheeks. It made her smile slightly.

Leaving the door open, she opened her eyes but soon she looked down at the ground.

Between Tsuki no Hokora and the forest surrounding it was the boundary of the spiritual barrier that protected the store. It was a boundary for Tiera, too.

If she stepped outside of the barrier, she couldn't predict what kind of monster would appear. Furthermore, whichever monster appeared it would attack her without reason.

She sighed and moved back towards Tsuki no Hokora. Though the border was a bit further, so she could have gone farther, her feet refused to move forward.

"Well, I will make some sweets."

She decided to make some sweets to forget unpleasant things.

Her sweets are one of the most popular items of the store. She reminded herself that she had to make them as replacements anyway and went to the kitchen.

She measured ingredients, kneaded, baked, wrapped them with a plastic bag, and then closed the bag with a ribbon.

There were few sweets in this world, her sweet that contained honey called "Cayfal", which Schnee called financier, was popular with both men and women.

Some adventurers who have kids came to the store only to buy Cayfal.

"Good, now I should place these on the shelf."

She felt happy whenever she thought about those who told her how much they enjoy it.

Even without magical power, it made her happy that she could make someone smile.

“Oop, I have to take care of the store.”

It seemed that nobody came while she made the sweets. But that didn’t mean she could leave the store unattended.

She reflected, she had focused too much on making sweets, so she sat on a chair at the counter.

At that moment, as if it were scheduled, the door opened.

Tiera saw an armored man from Bayreuth Kingdom. After she heard his story, she decided to notify Schnee.

Dealing with customers, managing items and trying to improve her skills in the workshop, she just repeated this day after day. While she seemed to repeat the same thing every day, no day was exactly the same as any other.

Days while she waited for Schnee to find a way to break her curse, days when she saw one person after another while the seasons changed. Tiera didn’t realize that these ordinary days would soon come to an end.